

What is Claimed is:

1. A motorized card reader module comprising:
a throat portion for receiving cards; and
an arm for traversing the throat portion to detect any obstruction within the throat portion.
2. A module according to claim 1, wherein the arm traverses generally horizontally from one side of the throat portion to an opposite side of the throat portion.
3. A module according to claim 1, wherein the arm includes a hook portion on a leading edge.
4. A module according to claim 3, wherein the arm includes a cutting mechanism for cutting any unauthorized material placed in the throat portion.
5. A module according to claim 4, further comprising a sensor for detecting when the arm is located at one end of the throat portion.
6. A module according to claim 5, further comprising another sensor for detecting when the arm is located at an opposite end of the throat portion.
7. A module according to claim 5, wherein the sensor is located to detect a cutting mechanism that is present on the arm, so that if the cutting mechanism is damaged the sensor can detect this.

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8. A module according to claim 3, wherein the hook portion is resiliently biased so that the hook portion may be deflected by, but remain in contact with, a card as the arm traverses the throat portion.

9. A motorized card reader module comprising:
means defining a throat portion for receiving a card; and
means for traversing the throat portion to detect an obstruction within the throat portion.

10. A module according to claim 9, wherein the traversing means includes an arm for traversing generally horizontally from one side of the throat portion to an opposite side of the throat portion.

11. A module according to claim 9, wherein the traversing means includes a cutting mechanism for cutting unauthorized material placed in the throat portion.

12. A module according to claim 11, further comprising sensing means for detecting if the cutting mechanism is damaged.

13. A self-service terminal comprising:
a fascia defining a card entry slot; and
a motorized card reader module including (i) a throat portion for receiving a card through the card entry slot, and (ii) an arm for traversing the throat portion to detect any obstruction within the throat portion.

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15. A self-service terminal according to claim 13, wherein the arm includes a hook portion on a leading edge.

16. A self-service terminal according to claim 15, wherein the hook portion is resiliently biased so that the hook portion may be deflected by, but remain in contact with, a card as the arm traverses the throat portion.

17. A self-service terminal according to claim 16, wherein the arm includes a cutting mechanism for cutting any unauthorized material placed in the throat portion.

18. A self-service terminal according to claim 17, further comprising sensor means for (i) detecting when the arm is located at one end of the throat portion, and (ii) detecting when the arm is located at an opposite end of the throat portion.

19. A self-service terminal comprising:
means defining a card entry slot; and
a motorized card reader module including (i) means defining a throat portion for receiving a card through the card entry slot, and (ii) a member for traversing the throat portion to detect an obstruction within the throat portion.

20. A self-service terminal according to claim 19, wherein the member includes an arm for traversing generally horizontally from one side of the throat portion to an opposite side of the throat portion.

21. A self-service terminal according to claim 20, further comprising sensor means for (i) detecting when the arm is located at one end of the throat portion, and (ii) detecting when the arm is located at an opposite end of the throat portion.

22. A method of preventing fraud, the method comprising the steps of:
driving a member to traverse a throat portion of a card reader module; and
activating an alert signal in response to detection of a failure of the member to traverse the throat portion correctly.

23. A method according to claim 22, wherein the member includes an arm for traversing generally horizontally from one side of the throat portion to an opposite side of the throat portion.

24. A method of operating a self-service terminal which includes a card reader module having a throat portion, the method comprising the steps of:
traversing a member in the throat portion of the card reader module; and
detecting when the member is unable to correctly traverse the throat portion.

25. A method according to claim 24, further comprising the step of:
activating an alert signal upon detection of the member being unable to correctly traverse the throat portion.

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26. A method according to claim 24, wherein the member includes an arm for traversing generally horizontally from one side of the throat portion to an opposite side of the throat portion.

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